

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hickory was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Wednesday, September 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., with the following members present:

Tony Wood	Hank Guess	David Williams
Charlotte C. Williams	Aldermen	
Danny Seaver		Jill Patton

A quorum was present.

Also present were: City Manager Warren Wood, Assistant City Manager Rick Beasley, Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller, City Attorney John W. Crone, III, Deputy City Attorney Arnita Dula arrived at 5:40 p.m., Deputy City Clerk Crystal B. Mundy and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller

- I. Mayor Guess called the meeting to order. All Council members were present except for Alderman Zagaroli. Alderman Williams at 5:35 p.m.
- II. Proposed Redistricting Plans – Presentation by Deborah Stagner, Tharrington Smith and Demographer Blake Esselstyn

City Manager Warren Wood advised the workshop presentation was on the proposed new districts for Council's wards. Council was not obligated to decide tonight. He mentioned that looking back at previous ward maps, the changes with the census, the ward boundaries changed less this time considerably than last time. A lot of it was tweaking around the edges. They could discuss and decide what direction they wanted to head in. If they were to settle on one, the consultants were going to come back with an interactive map that gave a little more resolution on the streets and whatnot. He turned over the presentation to Deborah Stagner with Tharrington Smith and Blake Esselstyn.

Ms. Deborah Stagner commented it was nice to be back in Hickory. The main event tonight was going to be Mr. Esselstyn and his maps. She reviewed with Council where they were. They obviously have to redistrict to make sure that the population of each ward was substantially equal to comply with one person, one vote. They have the new census numbers, and they could tell that the City's current districts, current wards did not meet the requirement. The last time they were here, they reviewed the redistricting guidelines, and they went through the requirements of one person, one vote; not deluding or over concentrating minority voting strength to comply with the Voting Rights Act; and not splitting census blocks. Those were the stable core of the redistricting principles. They presented some options for Council to consider. Did they want to keep the districts with the same general configuration that they were now? Did they want to keep districts reasonably compact to the extent possible? Do they want to consider incumbency and where Council all lived currently and not move an incumbent out of their ward? Consider areas that might have potential growth in the future? Council decided on those redistricting criteria at a subsequent meeting, and they were conveyed to Mr. Esselstyn. Mr. Esselstyn would walk Council through some maps. She asked Mr. Esselstyn to do that and explain the changes that he made. She advised they both would be happy to answer any questions and she could talk a little bit more about the process after tonight. Council would need to have a public hearing on the maps before they were formally adopted. Depending on what kind of publicity they wanted to have about that, whether they wanted to have the public hearing and decide, or if they wanted to wait until a subsequent meeting after the public hearing and decide, and then adopt the resolution. She would answer questions now or at the end, after they had a chance to see the maps. She asked Mr. Esselstyn to continue the presentation.

City Manager Warren Wood commented along those lines, he did not want to be presumptuous, obviously they were not going to decide tonight that was for the public hearing, but if they were leaning towards one, as Manager, he was obligated to make a recommendation. He would make a recommendation, but they would have the public hearing the second meeting in October as it stood right now.

Ms. Stagner commented to sort of set the stage, Council could pick one tonight that they would prefer and put that forward as the map that would be presented at the public hearing or they could have both options available at the public hearing and get feedback on both of them or they could say to them, specifically Mr. Esselstyn, neither one of these are really exactly what they were hoping for and could they look at something different or are there particular changes that they were interested in seeing.

Mr. Blake Esselstyn commented it was good to be here again. He presented a PowerPoint presentation and an identical slide to one that he presented the last time that he was before Council. He explained on the left side was the wards in their current configuration, the existing wards. In matching colors, the bar chart on the right showed the population. The height of those bars indicated the population of the existing wards as measured in the 2020 census. A snapshot from April of 2020. On that bar chart he noted a solid line, the horizontal lines near the top, the solid one in the middle indicated the ideal population, that was the total population divided by the number of wards. That was 7,248, within plus or minus five percent was acceptable range, the permissible range. That was the dash line below and the dotted line above. Only wards two and three actually fell into that permissible range. He explained the reason why he was spending some time reviewing this, was he thought that it was helpful to look at what the existing lay of the land was, what the starting situation was. When they see that the three wards that were below the permissible population range, ward one, which was right in the center and did not have any current connection to the outer boundary of the corporate limits. Also wards four and five which were on the western

side. Interestingly too, wards two and three were in the acceptable range, ward two was very close to the upper limit and ward two only shared a boundary with ward six. Ward six was the biggest outlier. That was the one with the population that was most significantly outside the permissible range. When he was before Council last time, they had very recently gotten the census numbers, he had a map from the Census Bureau and a map from the News and Observer. He referred to the PowerPoint and advised it was a map that he made showing Catawba County and this was a similar color ramp or color shading to what they might have seen in other maps where the shade of green indicated growth and the shade of yellow and orange indicated reduction in population. He purposely grayed out the parts of Catawba County, that were not within the town. He did not include the Burke and Caldwell pieces. He pointed out they could see that the majority of the area within the City limits. He advised the shapes here were Census tracts, which tend to be about 4,000 people. It was consistent with the location of ward six, that being the area that had the highest population above the acceptable range. He pointed out a tract which had growth over 20 percent. Most of the area in the City's corporate limits experienced growth. He pointed out the area to the southeast which had some reduction. It was anywhere from zero percent to negative five percent. He pointed out an area and advised that it could be that actually the areas within the City of Hickory grew slightly but that tract as a whole had a decrease in population. This was another reminder of the uneven distribution of population change, which was why they were doing this, and to give a sense of where the growth that had to be adjusted for took place. He mentioned that he was just revisiting this, after having looked at that, he thought it might be helpful to compare this back to their existing districts. The basic task here was to bring the populations of wards one, four and five up and bring six down, but because ward three shared such a long border with those and the population of ward two was so high, so close to the limit, and was also expected to experience more annexation and growth based on his conversations with staff, they would notice that changes got made to two in all of these options as well.

Mr. Esselstyn referred to the PowerPoint slide and explained in talking with staff, and also from his own experience driving around and looking at the map, it appeared that Highway 127 was a significant divider. He was curious to see what fraction of the population was on the west side of 127 and what was on the east side. He referred to the slide and pointed out the area, which was on the east side of Highway 127, this was 64 percent of the City's population, and 36 percent was on the west side. Part of the reason he brought this up was he was curious to see this. He also noticed that five of the districted incumbents lived on the west side and only one on the east side. Even though the majority of the population was in that eastern half, the majority of the representatives on Council, in fact five out of six, lived on the west side and the one that did not lived approximately a half a mile away from 127. He did not bring this up as a critique, it was just a way of saying this made for an interesting constraint in trying to make sure that according to the guidelines that Council provided to them, drawing districts where each Council member in a ward was able to stay in that ward, and as a result of that it imposed some limits on what changes he could make. This was all about constraints. As Ms. Stagner and he had mentioned there was attention, a trade-off between trying to satisfy this guideline as well as for example, trying to keep things compact.

Mr. Esselstyn looked at the draft plans. He wanted to take a moment to remind folks about precincts and actually a lot of the precincts were currently divided. He referred to the PowerPoint slide and pointed out the black lines which were the precinct boundaries. He noted one in the middle had three different wards in this precinct. On Election Day, if a voter goes to their voting place, for example, and in the primary, it could be that folks who lived in the same precinct and went to the same polling place were voting for three different ward races under this map. He pointed out an area that was split between ward five and ward one. One of the instructions was to try and resolve some of these precinct(s) splits. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a map of the existing wards and compared it to Option "A". He explained the basic approach here was to try and bring the population of ward six lower while bringing the populations of wards one, five, and four higher. The place that he started was taking some of the eastern part of what was now ward six and adding that to ward one. As far as bringing up the population of ward five, he pointed out between ward five and ward six, a number of areas of ward six had been removed to go into ward five and increase the population of ward five. He pointed out that they wanted to bring the population of ward two down a little bit and noted the area of ward two that was actually brought into ward six. As far as raising the population of ward four, he pointed out the area which was currently ward five and would become part of ward four and a little bit extra in another area. Some areas that are currently in ward three were going into ward four. He advised that was an overview, a summary, of the changes in Option "A". He advised in Council's packets that staff assembled there was an Option "A" group and Option "B" group. He would continue going back and forth between Option "A" and Option "B".

Mr. Esselstyn discussed the process in Option "B" which was a slightly more of a two-step process. In the existing boundary, ward one was sort of in the center and it was landlocked. It was surrounded by other wards. In Option "A" ward one gets extended out and it was not a terribly compact shape, but it seemed to be a reasonable shape. When they see the precinct boundaries that might help explain it as well. In Option "B" he tried to keep ward one more compact. He advised that meant sort of a two-step process whereby they could see that ward one extended into a part of what was currently ward three, and then ward three moved up along the eastern edge. He noted these on the map. Instead of ward one extending to the edge, ward one stayed more compact, takes part of the northern northwestern part of ward three and then ward three moves up. The changes in ward five between ward five, ward six, and ward one, were a little more similar. He

noted the area which ward five would end up getting. It was slightly different in terms of how ward one and ward two adjustments were made. Some changes in terms of the additions to ward four that included an area, a longer strip along the west side, that demographically was more similar to the existing makeup of ward four. A change in the shape of part of ward three extended into ward four and was less compact but made for more demographically similar populations in ward four because workforce population needed to be increased and Option "B" added areas that were more demographically similar to ward four. This was in keeping with the communities of interest guideline that they had spoken about.

Mr. Esselstyn provided additional explanations. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a single map with the changes. He used as an example ward four, and advised the solid yellow background indicated what was proposed for ward four in Option "A" and the dots were what was the existing ward. He pointed out the area that was currently in ward three and noted areas that were currently in ward five. He advised this may be a better way to see the areas that were brought out of ward six into ward five. He advised this could be helpful for understanding where the changes were happening. If you looked at the entire geographic area, there was not a whole lot that was going from one ward to another. He displayed a very similar map for Option "B". He commented that it might be helpful if Council had them printed out to put the maps of Option "B" and Option "A" next to each other. As he described before, there were some differences in what parts of what were currently ward three going into ward four, which he noted on the PowerPoint map. He pointed out the change in what was added to ward one and what was added to ward three. He advised the slide was just another way of showing what they were looking at in previous slides. He discussed the precinct boundaries because that was one thing that they had talked about as one of the guidelines, one of the goals. Because of the constraints he mentioned earlier, he was not able to make any substantial changes here. Some of the changes, for example, added areas to ward four. The area he showed did not have a lot of population. It was not so significant for balancing the population, but right now within this precinct, there was both ward four and ward three. This would bring all of this into ward four. There was a similar situation where a piece was currently part of ward two and part of ward six. He did not know about the population in the area. He brought all of the pieces that were in this precinct into ward three. He acknowledged that this was a situation where right now this precinct was split but there was only one, what was called a traversal, whereas in this case actually there were two traversals, two splits here. He believed there was one other place where what had been a split precinct was made whole. In Option "B" a lot of those changes were kept the same. He pointed out areas which made them all into ward four or ward three. He pointed out an area that was still divided into three different precincts. It was divided into three wards. He knew the amount of making precincts whole between the two options was not substantial. Efforts were made in both of these two to try and have boundaries follow precincts, precinct boundaries were possible.

City Manager Warren Wood commented it looked like the one furthest to the east, in the original one was ward two, satellite, the furthest one to the right, ward three was now ward one.

Mr. Esselstyn pointed out an example, it was minor, the precinct boundary followed a major road and right now this precinct was in three different wards. This would make it just be in ward three and ward six. A portion of it that was currently in ward two would become part of ward six. In terms of statistics, there were not any enormous differences between Option "A" and Option "B". It was helpful to look at the statistics for the current plan. He referred to the PowerPoint and noted the key column as far as the legal requirements to get the populations in balance. All of these were not only within the plus or minus five percent, with the exception of ward two which was deliberately made low, it was actually made low in both of these. He advised this was what Ms. Stagner had mentioned anticipating future growth and setting the population a little lower in an area like ward two where there was expected to be annexation and more residential development. That was why ward two's population was negative 3.5 percent roughly, and in the other option about 4.1 percent, so when that growth comes in, the wards will stay more or less in balance. They tried to stay away from the extremes, nothing that either plus or minus 4.9. He noted these were in draft form and subject to small changes. The Census Bureau's Reporting of what City of Hickory's boundaries were based on the snapshot from early 2020 and there had been annexations since then and there were some other minor annexations that the Census Bureau did not account for. This usually did not amount to more than a couple dozen people but there would likely be some small changes. There was also one example of a split block. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a map of one census block. The census blocks were sort of the smallest puzzle piece in this puzzle. In 2011 this must have been reported as 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Place Northwest, 10<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest.

City Manager Warren Wood asked Public Works Director Steve Miller if he knew where that was located.

Public Works Director Steve Miller advised Lakeland Park, off of Geitner Road, close to Alderwoman Patton.

Mr. Esselstyn commented the population of this split block was 82 people. In the previous census, with the roads that did not actually connect, they considered it a connecting road and created a block. Those blocks ended up in different wards. Now they have that as a single block. They knew there were 82 people but did not know how that would be split up. They need to make this one whole. Even if this was an area that would otherwise be proposed for change, there would be

these kinds of corrections. This was the only example he had found. It was a minor change, but this mostly had to do with reporting the population of the current wards, because they do not know exactly what the population was in the wards, because they do not know how many people were on each side. He concluded the presentation and was happy to entertain questions or discussion. He advised the City's staff had the ability to bring up the interactive map of the current wards. He would be providing an interactive online map of these draft plans. He did not have one of those ready yet but in the coming days he would. In the meantime, if it was helpful to say "I want to have a better understanding what this area near the western tip of ward six or something is" they could bring it up on the interactive map on the computer here and show it on the screen.

Alderwoman Patton thought that it would be helpful to zero in on what streets and have someone that could identify what areas that they were moving because it was a little hard to look at dots in an area and not know exactly where it was.

Mr. Esselstyn understood that being on an 8.5 x 11 map. He asked staff to bring up the map. He pointed out under Option "A" an area where ward one would be extending out to, which was 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Drive NE, 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Circle NE, 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Under Option "A" portions of this would become part of ward one. The other major changes in ward six, he pointed out the incumbent's zone, 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW would maintain, but some of the area in Viewmont, 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue Place NW as well as some areas around the Country Club. The Country Club area would be part of ward five and this boundary would follow 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW. Those were the significant areas that would be taken out of ward six. The area that would be added to ward six would be in part of ward two.

City Manager Warren Wood advised it looked like Sunset Hills.

Alderwoman Williams asked if that was 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

City Manager Warren Wood replied yes.

Mr. Esselstyn commented 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. He noted the portion that would be coming out of ward two and be added to ward six in Option "A". He displayed the changes to ward one in Option "B". In Option "B" he noted an area that would become part of ward six. He noted a census block following 4<sup>th</sup> Street Boulevard NW.

Alderwoman Williams commented given the criteria that Council ranked and approved, she was thinking two and six had the highest growth. She asked what the benefit of exchanging the populations was there.

Mr. Esselstyn advised ward two only shared a boundary with ward six. If they are going to bring ward two's population down.

Alderwoman Williams interjected that six was high.

City Manager Warren Wood explained they had to take from ward six on the south side. They only have one place to balance that deduction out.

Mr. Esselstyn responded the only way to bring ward two's population down was to add something to ward six, and because ward six was the highest there were other areas that they would have to take from six. It was a multi-step logic.

Alderwoman Williams questioned the whole rationale because "A" and "B" were similar to her. She knew some of it was just proximity. Using the criteria of what he just showed, were they going to look at racial disparity and different things? How could they balance that more through either Option "A" or Option "B"? It did not really create any change.

Mr. Esselstyn asked Alderwoman Williams to be more specific on her question. He asked if she was saying there would have been changes between ward two and ward six.

Alderwoman Williams commented no, not so much there, but just different. She was looking at "A" and "B". Which one more significantly looked at certain criteria versus the other?

City Manager Warren Wood commented they were about the same in terms of the racial breakdown there.

Mr. Esselstyn responded they were quite similar. The demographic numbers for ward four were slightly different. Ward four was the one ward where the number of people who identified as only white was the minority. That was the one ward that fewer than 50 percent self-identified as only white. They were multi-racial people. Option "B" took that into consideration as trying to add areas because ward four's population was low. Add areas that were consistent with that kind of demographic profile that was currently there, communities of color.

City Manager Warren Wood asked Ms. Stagner to remind Council what they could and could not consider in terms of race in drawing these boundaries.

Ms. Stagner advised under the Voting Rights Act, what they could not do was use race to intentionally disadvantage any minority population voting strength. They could not dilute it so that their voting strength was lowered in any particular district. They could not, what was sometimes called packing, was pack all minorities into one district so that they do not impact, they do not have the ability to impact races in elections in the other wards. Race should not be used as a predominant or primary criteria except to the extent that they want to ensure that they were not diluting racial voting strength. If there was a cohesive minority population, you do not want to split that up so that they cannot vote together to elect candidates of their choice. Mr. Esselstyn did not take race affirmatively into account in deciding where populations would go. They used the neutral criteria, except again, to the extent that Council had said certain communities of interest should be kept together and so he would use that if it came between moving a piece here and a piece here, look at the communities of interest. She asked if that answered the question. There was no effort to do any sort of racial balancing or anything like that. Ward four historically had a large black population. It was kept that way so that the percentage stayed approximately the same so those communities would have the same influence that they have had in the past.

Mr. Esselstyn commented maybe another way of addressing Alderwoman Williams question was there was no sort of a way, across the board, Option "A" was designed to favor compactness when there was tension between compactness and trying to put precincts together. Option "B" was more focused on precincts rather than compactness. There was not an overarching theme. In fact, in ward one, it ended up being more compact in Option "B", but ward four was actually more compact in Option "A". Council could direct them their preferences. He could try to reconcile some of their preferences. Once they start making larger changes there are cascading effects.

City Manager Warren Wood advised this was the third one of these that he had been through, and this was by far the least number of changes. They were pretty consistent with what currently exists if folks were fairly satisfied, particularly Option "A". He did a visual exercise and went back and forth toggling between the options and it seemed like "A" had even fewer changes than "B" did, geographic changes to the boundaries.

Mr. Esselstyn mentioned in Option "B" in an effort to keep ward one more compact and in its central space that it currently occupies in the center, and not having a presence on the eastern edge of the City limits, what that meant doing was actually making a sequence of changes. That change of taking some of ward three, Falling Creek, 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, in Option "B" ward one moved down and ward three moved up taking some of the population from ward six. Option "A" actually went into ward one. Like the City Manager said it took more changes to keep ward one compact. And keeping ward three, ward six and ward two with a presence on the eastern edge of the City boundary. He discussed the changes in ward six Option "B". He advised the most significant thing was the area that came out of ward six, but instead of it going into ward one it was going into ward three. It was a little hard to see on a printed map. He pointed out the area that was going into ward three, in Option "A" it was going into ward one. He pointed out 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Drive NE, 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Circle NE. On the western side of ward one the changes were similar around the Country Club and the Viewmont area, those changes were similar, there was a little difference of the shape of the area that was switched from ward two into ward six. A slightly less compact shape but an effort to follow the larger roads. He asked if anyone else wanted him to zoom in on a part of town and explain where the changes were applicable.

Alderman Williams asked for him to explain ward four.

Mr. Esselstyn explained ward four's current population numbers were low. Ward four and ward one was about the same, needing approximately 800 people to get to the appropriate population levels. What was added in Option "A" to ward four was basically up to Main Avenue NW. He noted a notch that was already there and based on a precinct boundary. It followed Main Avenue NW and would be added into ward four. He pointed out one block that would be added to ward four. He noted the area where it ended at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Place NE, which resolved into a triangle. This boundary followed 10<sup>th</sup> Street NE, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street NE. The other pieces that were being added to ward four were coming out of ward five or ward three. He noted an area that would be coming out of ward three as well. The other minor change in Option "A" and Option "B" was parts of ward three would become part of ward four. There was not a lot of population there, as he recalled, but it was an effort to make all of the area in the precinct be the same one. Ward four in Option "B" the changes were in the same areas, but with different shapes. He noted an area in ward three that was going into ward four. He noted the block which had a more substantial population, and a small part of ward four would become a part of ward three to provide a connection to the incumbent's residence. He advised it made for a less compact shape. The same triangle that was added in Option "B" as well as Option "A", the boundary of ward four would include an area that hugged the western edge along the corporate limits of the City near Longview.

Alderman Seaver asked why the effort to keep the wards fitting into the precincts. He asked if the precinct lines had to be redrawn in census too.

Mr. Esselstyn advised the precinct boundaries were drawn quite regularly and was a more involved process. There were three main reasons. One argument was voter confusion, which he alluded to earlier, when you have people that are showing up to vote at the same polling place and are voting

for different Council members. Voter confusion, having the principle of people voting in the same place having the same representatives. Another principle was from an election administration standpoint, which leads to how the database was operated and maintained, but the short of it was it was much easier for the Boards of Elections to maintain their records and their database and make sure that everybody was in the right place if it was based on precincts rather than having to follow streets or census blocks or other things that are not already an integrated part of their database. Some people had made the argument regarding gerrymandering. If they had built their whole map out of whole precincts it was much harder for someone to say they used surgical precision and carved this up into some strange shape. If you can say no, this was built out of two and a half dozen precincts, it was harder to make an argument that this was done in some convoluted way if they were using larger building blocks. There was even a piece of that where some mathematicians would argue that. He could go into the weeds about differential privacy, and if they were aggregating blocks into larger administrative units, they were less likely to have errors related to this thing called differential privacy. He advised that some local governments chose not to pay attention to precincts at all.

Alderman Seaver asked why the City would want to.

Mr. Esselstyn replied for the reasons he just mentioned. Other bodies do not find that compelling. He referred back to the PowerPoint and displayed a map. These were relatively compact compared to some of the ones in other parts of the State. He was in Asheville and the topography, and rivers and things had some very winding shapes. He used Iredell County as an example, there were some precincts that had such wacky shapes that trying to adhere to them would make for very oddly shaped districts. It was considered one of the traditional criteria. If they looked at the General Assembly's criteria that they were using for their redistricting process, they were stipulating precincts, they use the term voter tabulations districts, essentially the same thing, should not be split unless absolutely necessary. It had been historically considered traditional best practice, but it was not a legal requirement. He tried to honor it to an extent. He made some fixes around the edges to make some of the wards whole. He noted where the changes had been made. He noted in the case of Option "B" one of the precincts no longer had three wards it only had two. This was something he considered but it was not his primary objective.

Alderman Williams commented she probably had the least contiguous ward, it kind of jumps around and she was still learning all of the different pieces. She asked if he could tell her what some of those little areas were that were going to be changed.

Mr. Esselstyn commented ward three had a lot of those satellite areas too. He pointed out Catawba Springs Country Club on the map and another area on the map.

Alderman Williams asked if it was Olde Mill Landing.

City Manager Warren Wood asked Public Works Director Steve Miller if he could tell them what it was.

Alderman Williams commented those stayed the same. She wanted to know which ones were leaving.

Mr. Esselstyn referred to the changes in ward two in either plan by pointing them out on the PowerPoint.

City Manager Warren Wood advised it was Sunset Hills. She would lose some of Sunset Hills.

City Council members thought big maps would be helpful.

City Manager Warren Wood advised he had taken Council's Planning Board Member Appointments because those were by ward, except for the At-Large, and it looked as if in the first option, Option "A", that everybody was still within the ward that they were appointed by. He did not get a chance to look at Option "B" yet.

Alderman Williams asked how this played into the different redistricting of the State level and Congressional Districts.

Mr. Esselstyn advised there was really no connection.

Ms. Stagner replied as she had talked about before Council was responsible for redistricting the City of Hickory. The General Assembly was responsible for redistricting the State. Every entity was responsible for its redistricting and there really was not unless Council was to consider that an important priority. There was a constitutional provision that talks about the whole County provision at the State level. There was not a coordinated effort.

Mr. Esselstyn advised there was the possibility should the General Assembly choose they have the ability to declare what the districts would be for local governments. That did not happen often. There were cases where that had happened. That would be one case where the General Assembly could be involved, but it was a separate process from the congressional and State legislative.

Ms. Stagner advised there were school boards, counties, and cities across the State where the General Assembly has reached down and said these are your districts. Sometimes they give a procedure when this district could be changed and sometimes it was just forever after this law, this local act was established. Then they go through the same process at the next census.

Mayor Guess asked for any other questions related to the maps. He asked what Council's next steps were.

City Manager Warren Wood advised they would get Council more detailed oriented information so they could dig down into the street level. He thought before Council saw that it was probably not a good idea to talk about options.

Mayor Guess commented obviously they were not going to pick an option tonight. He asked what their next step was.

City Manager Warren Wood advised they would get Council the information and ultimately, he was going to make a recommendation that Council could do whatever they wanted to with it, but there was going to be a public hearing.

Ms. Stagner reminded Council of the process that she talked about at the first meeting. They have a deadline of November 17<sup>th</sup> to provide their established plan, adopted plan to the Board of Elections. If they do not think they could meet that it could be pushed to December 17<sup>th</sup>. There was special legislation passed this year to make sure that cities had time to redistrict. That would give the City two deadlines that would push back filing, etc. By November 12<sup>th</sup> if they think that they were not going to be able to meet that November 17<sup>th</sup> deadline they would need to inform the Board of Elections so they could have that next December 17<sup>th</sup> date. The next step was again to have a public hearing and then to adopt a resolution, approve a resolution adopting the new maps. If there were changes that Council desired between now and the final adoption, if something comes up at the public hearing, and there was a desire on the part of the Council to see a different alternative or see one of these with some slight adjustments made, that was a possibility as well. Council's time was sort of getting short, but there was certainly time to make changes if it was desired.

Alderman Wood asked if she would be presenting at the public hearing, would she be present.

Ms. Stagner advised she could certainly be present at the public hearing if that was what the Council would like.

Alderman Wood commented regardless of whoever presents, he thought the maps needed to be much clearer given the confusion with Hickory streets anyway. He thought anybody that was attending the public hearing, they need to have it highlighted and very apparent where these boundaries are. We are a landmark town we go by landmarks.

Ms. Stagner advised Mr. Esselstyn would be able to produce an interactive map, like the one that was on the City's website for the alternatives that could be published in advance of the public hearing, so that citizens who were interested could zoom in and look and see where those boundary lines were. They could go from one plan to the next plan, they could look at plans on top of each other and do that kind of comparison, that was cumbersome to do with paper maps and an online system. It was just challenging, but something that Mr. Esselstyn could prepare. If there were no changes to these two alternatives that Council would want to see he could put those maps together and Council and the public could have a chance to look at them and have questions formulated before the public hearing.

City Manager Warren Wood commented they would not advertise for the public hearing unless that was ready for people to look at.

Mayor Guess asked Council for any other questions. He thanked Ms. Stagner and Mr. Esselstyn.

III. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Clerk